

# ROCHESTER'S IMPENDING STORM WATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

## Part VII – As An Individual, How Can You Protect Water Quality?

Individuals can adopt many practices, particularly at home, that can help improve water quality. Many people do not realize that the wastewater treatment plant does NOT treat water entering storm sewers. Chemicals, yard waste, and sediment can enter our waterways and harm fish and aquatic life within them. There are many easy steps YOU can take to help protect our water quality.

### General

- ☐ NEVER dump anything in storm drains.
- ☐ Dispose of used chemicals and paint products properly at the Hazardous Waste Facility.
- ☐ Don't litter.
- ☐ Use wood decking or interlocking blocks to minimize your amount of impervious area.
- ☐ Pick up pet waste and dispose of it in the trash.

### Vehicle and Boat Care

- ☐ Avoid spilling gas on the ground or in the water.
- ☐ Repair engine leaks, take used oil to an oil retailer or recycler, and take other used auto fluids to the Olmsted County Hazardous Waste Facility (281-6222).
- ☐ Use commercial car washes or wash your car or boat on your lawn using a phosphate-free and non-toxic soap.
- ☐ Contain vehicle leaks by using drip pans, kitty litter, or sawdust and dispose of the fluid and absorbent in the trash.

### Yard and Garden

- ☐ Leave grass clippings on your lawn as a natural fertilizer.
- ☐ Test your soils to learn if you need to apply extra fertilizer.
- ☐ If your soil has adequate amounts of phosphorus, use "P"-free fertilizer ("0" as the middle number).
- ☐ Apply fertilizers at the correct rate and at the right time (in the fall), and never before a rain.
- ☐ Spot treat weeds and only apply herbicides when needed.
- ☐ Maintain a healthy lawn by mowing grass to a height of 2-3", seeding it in the spring & fall, and aerating & de-thatching it in the fall.
- ☐ Buy hardy plants that are relatively pest-free and suited to your site to reduce the need for chemical upkeep.
- ☐ Reduce the amount of maintained turf and increase naturalized areas.
- ☐ Install a 15' to 25' buffer strip of tall grass or plantings along water bodies.
- ☐ Mulch flowerbeds, shrubs and trees.
- ☐ Plant rain gardens to receive run-off from your roof (and direct downspouts away from hard surfaces).
- ☐ Keep lawn & garden chemicals, garden debris, lawn clippings, and leaves off hard surfaces.
- ☐ Don't kill unwanted weeds or vegetation with motor oil, gasoline or kerosene.

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9 **Protecting water quality is everybody's business.**